643 compelled him to take this step is characteristic not only of the high spirit of public duty which inspires his acts, but also of the consciousness of his responsibilities when in charge of public affairs. One or two sentences of the speech, suffice to portray the man. „It is," M. Gheorghiev declared, „a nefarious act to allow the public to perceive that the State shows partiality in its treatment of its subjects, and to favour some unduly at the expence of others... The sense of justice is being blunted, and such acts must cease"... and as they did not cease, M. Gheorghiev turned his back on his former colleagues and resigned, while the latter persevered in their campaign of spoliation and embezzlement.

645 663 As for M. Peter Todorov, the writer has nothing to alter in the opinion he expressed of him in a letter to the *Manchester Guardian* on Oct. 6, 1923, the object of which was to correct and mitigate the erroneous impressions the British public was forming of events in Bulgaria owing to the reports of some three misinformed Labour members of Parliament, who had then visited the country. This appreciation of M. Todorov was couched in the following terms: „No words would adequately express the esteem in which he is rightly held by those who have the privilege to know him. His unsparing denunciation of the abuses committed by the former Agrarian government and his scathing exposures of shady affairs are the best proof of his unswerving devotion to high ideals. As long as M. Todorov remains in the Cabinet there can be no fear of Bulgaria pursuing a reactionary policy". To the above may be added M. T. G. Vlaikov's appreciation, so that it may not be thought that such flattering remarks are inspired by the personal esteem the writer cherishes for one of the most stalwart champions of true radicalism in Bulgaria. M. Vlaikov is a distinguished writer, and a political thinker who until lately had played an active and reputable part

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in the social life of his country, and which may be likened to the role of the late much-regretted Charles Masterman in England. In his latest book, „Functionaries and Rulers" in which he related the rich and variegated experiences of his defunct brother in his capacity of a public functionary, and depicts in vivid colours the gradual deterioration of public morals, he lays stress on the fact, that, M. Todorov, on becoming Minister of Finances in 1923 startled all those about him by resolutely insisting that all functionaries in his department should be protected against dismissal and replacement by favourites and friends of the regime in power. That he worked with all possible zeal to render tenure of office secure for functionaries; this uncertainty as to their stability of employment being a veritable bane, and the main cause of maladministration in all Balkan countries. For a whole year there were no changes in the staff and the law relative to the appointment of functionaries in the Ministry of Finance was altered so that no one could be dismissed without the decision of a special disciplinary committee. Thus a dam against favouritism and political corruption had been effectively erected, but, M. Vlaikov, adds, no sooner had M. Todorov evacuated his post, that vents were made in the dam and soon the whole good work was undone. This shows how essential it is to have good men at the top, and all Bulgarians will readily agree that M. Todorov, in his capacity of Finance Minister has so far shown himself a very Cerberus on guard before the public purse, ready to defend it tooth and nail against dilapidations. Changes have occurred during this year (1935) in the composition of the Bulgarian Government, but the successors of M. Gheorghiev have all declared that their programme is identical to that of their predecessors and that they will pursue unflinchingly the task of purifying public life. All good-wishers of Bulgaria should wish them therefore success, for this is a pressing need.

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669 Bulgaria and keep them in readiness for an eventual military invasion of their native country. It is this latent danger which incited the neighbouring Balkan States to make such persistent efforts at Sofia for the dissolution of the Macedonian organisation. The removal of this ever present peril of war through the sudden incursion of Macedonian bands in Yugoslav, or Greek territory, has vastly increased the chances of a Bulgaro-Yugoslav rapprochement and promoted the work of pacification in the Balkans. Even if the Gheorghiev Cabinet had left no other record of its activities than this suppression of the Macedonian organisation, this would be sufficient for it to have secured a valid claim to the gratitude of all peace loving men and of the Bulgarian people above all. For the activities of the revolutionaries made themselves felt in Bulgaria far more than abroad, frequent murders, blackmailing, terrorism, flouting of justice, disregard for the prestige of the State's authority by the adherents of the revolutionary organisation, rendered its survival in Bulgaria a public danger and a factor of demoralisation, since the crimes and abuses its votaries committed were but very rarely punished.

631 663 Another laudable reform was the reduction of the administrative districts from sixteen to seven, while the rural communes, numbering 2552, were reduced to 800 approximately. This change will not only effect a diminution in the administrative staff and an economy in expenditure, estimated at between 80 to 100 million leva annually, but will also permit of a more rational economic organisation of the country. By regrouping the rural communes and lessening their numbers, more resources will be available for the communal autorities to carry on their work with more effectively. The perpetual feuds between villages over the possession of communal lands over which so much treasure and time was spent have ceased as if by

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enchantement, since by this reform rival villages have been incorporated in the same commune. These rivalries were encouraged and promoted by the politicians who hitherto made themselves indispensable to the villagers as intercessors with the authorities in their judicial disputes, and constituted a large source of revenue for all political partisans to the detriment naturally of the rural population. Communes henceforth are to have a population of at least 5000 and they will be governed by mayors appointed by the central government, on whom all authority will devolve. Mayors will choose their advisers from amongst the local notables, teachers and priests. The Government has decided to appoint as mayors, men with a university training in law, active and capable who by their example and by their knowledge will be able to raise the cultural level of the villages. They will be empowered to settle all disputes involving sums less than 2,000 leva among the villagers, thus expediting the course of Justice and settling quarrels rapidly. The perpetual drain of intellectual forces from the country to the towns, which had tended to deplete the rural districts of most intelligent forces, and which accounts for their relative backwardness, has now been fortunately reversed and one may hope for a certain improvement in rural conditions as a consequence of this reform.

This administrative reform had been advocated by many social thinkers but never carried out, for it did not suit the political parties to curtail official posts and functions in which they could accommodate their partisans. M. A. Yaranov in his „Bulgaria to-day and to-morrow," a book published in 1928, recommended for instance the suppression of at least four administrative districts, as likely to secure an economy of some 100 million leva per annum and to render 550 government posts superfluous. Even the Radical party had advocated similar curtailments, but

631 663 no government had ever decided to apply such a programme of retrenchment voluntarily and deprive itself of the privilege which the dispensation of posts brought to it. For it must not be forgotten that the politicians held the electorate by the hope of office and the civil service by fear of dismissal from their posts.

645 663 Another administrative reform was a decrease in the number of Ministries. That of railways, posts and telegraphs, has been merged with that of Public Works into a Ministry of Communications, while those of Agriculture, and of Commerce and Industry have been fused into the Ministry of National Economy. This change will not only effect an economy in the personnel, but will obviate the necessity of duplicating similar work and services and generally simplify and expedite the work of the institutes. While the placing of the Ministries of Industry and Agriculture under the same management will greatly facilitate the work of reconciling rival and often contradictory policies, which hitherto prevented the adoption of a rational general plan. Cuts and economies were effected in all branches of the administrations, the Ministers themselves setting the example by reducing their salaries by 50 %, an example which was followed by managers of both State and private banks and other institutions.

663 475 216 On July 12, 1934 less, than two months from his assuming power, M. Kimon Gheorghiev announced in a public speech that his government had licensed 6220 public functionaries and effected economies in the budget amounting to a minimum of 385 million leva. The efficiency with which the work of overhauling the functioning of the administration was carried out may be gauged by the report on the management of the Pernik coal mine, which is an autonomous institution under State control. The new directors found that the former Agrarian Minister Ghitsev, under whose province came the supervising of

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the mine, had nominated 75 partisans as supernumeraries at a daily wage varying between 120 and 150 leva and that these busybodies never presented themselves at the mine even to receive their salaries, but that they had their emoluments regularly remitted to them at their domiciles. Another 170 persons had likewise been appointed in order to receive stipends but without doing any work. The new administration dismissed all redundant functionaries and by the beginning of 1935 the staff had been reduced from 5750 early in 1934, to 5100. The cost of extraction nad been diminisued from an average of 217 leva per ton in 1933, to 193 leva in 1934, and the quantity of coal extracted per day of 8 working hours per miner had increased from 753 kg. to 839 kg. The total output of the mine for 1934 reached the record figure of 1,266,000 tons. A saving of some 30 millions had been realised in the working of the mine, in spite of a decrease of 20% in the price of the coal delivered to the State railways and of 10% to 16% in that furnished to other consumers, which reductions could be estimated as amounting to some 55 millions. The new management likewise attempted to improve the social amenities of the working people and was reported to have provided free meals for the children of the miners attending school, to have opened crèches, and replaced 500 miners, who possessed sufficient incomes to live independently, by others who had no resources whatever, a fact which shows that the colleagues of M. Gheorghiev were decided not only to effect economies, but also to deal out as large a measure of social justice as possible.

Another noteworthy measure passed by the Government was the law relative to the alleviation of debts, which radically solved a problem which was hanging fire for years. Owing to a drop of about 65% in the prices of agricultural produce between 1920 and 1933, the peasantry

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found itself utterly unable to meet its obligations and it became imperative to tackle drastically the question of indebtedness so as to permit debtors to fulfil their obligations and thus reopen the channels of credit which momentarily had become choked, and impart a new impetus to the economic life of the country which was threatening to come to a standstill. The measure aimed chiefly at helping the small farmers, and to a lesser degree the artisans and small traders. They affected debts up to 300,000 leva and contracted prior to January 1, 1931, which were reduced by this decree to the extent of 40% 30%, and 20% respectively for each of these three categories of debtors Certain mitigations were granted to those who had contracted debts as sureties, while debtors owing over 300,000 leva were awarded a reduction in the rate of interest hitherto payable on their debts, as well as an extension of time for their repayment. The losses entailed were to be taken over by a specially created institute to which the State would henceforth affect revenues from certain imposts to the amount of some 220 milions annually which would suffice to meet the liabilities created by this measure. Private debts are estimated at about 12 milliard leva and it is reckoned that about 50% of the total will benefit rom this law. By July 1935, 281,177 claims had been registered with the special „caisse d'amortissement" created for this purpose for a total sum of 6,417,043,822 leva according to the Bulletin of the Agricultural Bank for July 1935. It is interesting to note that some 600 communes were reported as having filed claims, among which figured some municipalities of large towns such as Pleven and Plovdiv, a fact which proves that municipal finances are in a bad state in Bulgaria. For years previously both the Agrarianss and Communists had been making capital of this question of private debts and instigating debtors not to pay, promising the electorate that if it voted for them

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they would pass a law abolishing all private indebtedness. 426
It is gratifying to note that in spite of all this arrant 663
demagogy and incitement to default, the peasantry has not deviated from its traditional honesty, and that in spite of the crisis it has done its best to meet its liabilities. The annual reports of the Agricultural Bank show that its advances to the peasants have during the years 1930 to 1933 slowly but steadilly decreased and that their total indebtedness to the bank had been reduced by 300 million leva at the end of 1933, as compared with the year 1929. In the bank's report for 1933 it is stated that the peasantry has ceased increasing its indebtedness owing to its being conscious of the necessity of adjusting its debts to the present level of their income, a fact which speaks very highly of its common sense as well as of its determination to maintain its standard of integrity by which Bulgarians have so far distinguised themselves from their neighbours.

One of the most active members of the Cabinet was 652
its Finance Minister, M. Peter Todorov, who in a brief 655
period of a few months succeeded in settings order in his department so that the salaries of public functionnaries which were some five months in arrear, began being paid again regularly. Debts to Government contractors which had remained unpaid for years were liquidated and with indefatigable energy M. P. Todoroff set creating new sources of revenue for the State. These were the monopolies of alcohol, tobacco, salt, light mineral oils and school text books. There was an intensive contraband carried on in alcohol, and the State was being deprived of millions of revenue which otherwise ought to have flowed into its coffers. The returns of the Excise on spirituous drinks were yearly diminishing correspondingly with the reported consumption of both beer and alcoholic drinks as may be noted from the following table: